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ABSTRACT

Pupil profiles were presented to teachers which varied on the Social Class (MC/LC) and IQ (131/93) information they contained. Half the Ss (committed condition) completed a questionnaire after reading the profile but prior to working with a child confederate on a task. All Ss completed a questionnaire on the child confederate after the task. On both questionnaires adjective ratings showed few Social Class differences. However, Ss predicted that the LoSES pupil would obtain less education and his parents were rated as less interested in his education and desiring less education for him. The effect of Social Class on teacher behavior varied as a function of Commitment: in the Uncommitted condition the LoSES pupil received a greater percentage of Positive Affect Statements; in the Committed condition the HiSES pupil was favored. (Author)

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Effect of Pupil's Social Class Upon Teachers'
Expectations and Behavior

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428
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CH 010
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Several studies (Becker, 1952; Clark, 1963; Herriott and St. John, 1966; and Leacock, 1969) have shown that teachers generally have more negative attitudes toward, and lower expectations for, lower class than middle class pupils. Other investigators (Davis and Dollard, 1940; Becker, 1952; Rist, 1970, and Richer, 1974) have reported differences in teacher behavior which favored middle class pupils. A basic problem with several of these studies is that often no attempt was made to sort out which differences were attributable to the pupil's social class alone and those which were attributable to ability and behavior differences that were confounded with social class in the data. Hoehn (1954) controlled for achievement and found that differences in teacher behavior that were associated with pupil's social class were incidental effects of the teacher's tendency to favor high achievers. More recently, Gabbert (1973) found essentially the same thing. Richer (1974), who reported that working class students received significantly less than their expected share of teacher-student interactions while children of professionals received more than their expected share, found, after further analysis, that the difference in total interaction derived as much from fewer student initiated interactions by the working class students as from any difference in teacher initiated interactions.

Three studies have been done which systematically controlled for all variables to assess the effect of social class alone. Garfield et al. (1971) found that counselors selected more severe courses of action to deal with a behavior problem described as lower class than one described as middle class. Miller (1973) found that teachers had higher expectations for a student presented as middle class. Both Garfield et al. and Miller varied

the social class information presented to their Ss but little else. Long and Henderson (1972), who varied pupil's race, social class, test scores and classroom behavior, found that classroom behavior and test scores affected teachers' expectancies while class and race did not. This suggests that teachers' expectations are not affected by pupils' social class when more specific and relevant information is available.

The current study was carried out to see how social class per se affects teachers' expectations and impressions of a child and the impact of pupil's social class on teachers' behavior. Two other issues were also investigated:

1. Assuming that a teacher forms an impression of a child from written information, how amenable is this impression to new information, specifically the pupil's behavior during a learning task? To get at this, Ss were asked to assess the pupil by questionnaire before and after they worked with him.

2. A methodological issue was noted¹: completing a pre-task questionnaire might enhance a S's commitment to her initial impression of the pupil, which, in turn, might affect her interaction with him and her responses to the post-task questionnaire. To investigate these points, half the teachers completed a pre-task questionnaire (the Committed condition) while half did not.

METHOD

Subjects:

The Ss were 30 female teachers or former teachers with at least one year of teaching experience who were living in Ithaca, New York or the surrounding area during the summer of 1973.

¹This issue was brought to the author's attention by Dr. John Condry, Cornell University.

Child Confederate:

A 12-year-old, small for his age, boy portrayed a fourth grade pupil. He played the same role for all Ss, making 12 correct and 2 incorrect words during the 12-minute anagrams task. He behaved in a passively cooperative, but not enthusiastic, manner at the beginning of the session gradually indicating growing resistance to the task by several rehearsed phrases. Eight minutes into the task he uttered a statement intended to be provocative, "This is stupid, You're probably the stupidest teacher I've ever met." This was done to assess the Ss's responses to a pupil verbally attacking them and to break through some of the "ideal teacher" facade they might have erected knowing that they would be taped.

Experimental Design:

In addition to social class, the pupil's IQ was varied, being given as either 93 or 131. A 2(HISES/LOSES) x 2(HiIQ/LowIQ) x 2(Committed/Uncommitted) factorial design was employed.

Procedure:

After the S arrived the E asked her to look over a profile sheet containing information on the pupil she would work with. All the profile sheets had the same information except for IQ (131 or 93) and social class (father's occupation and education given as lawyer, law degree or gas station attendant, 8th grade education), both of which were varied resulting in four pupil profiles: HISESHiIQ, HISESLoIQ, LOSESHiIQ and LOSESLoIQ.

Committed Ss were asked to complete the Pre-task Questionnaire at this point. The questionnaire asked them to rate the child on 15 bipolar adjective pairs and to rate the child's ultimate educational attainment, their

perception of his parents' educational aspirations and parental interest in his education, and whether they thought they would like to have him in their class.

After the Pre-task Questionnaire was completed, or after reading the pupil profile in the Uncommitted condition, the E described the anagrams task, told the S the word norm for 4th grade pupils and asked the S how many words she thought her pupil would make. This was recorded as a measure of the S's expectation of pupil performance.

The S was then introduced to the child confederate and given the material necessary for the anagrams task. This included three letters which the S could give the pupil at her discretion. If there were no questions, the E started the tape recorder and observed the session from a booth attached to the task room.

After the task session the child left and the S completed the Post-task Questionnaire. This contained essentially the same items as the Pre-task Questionnaire plus a new section which asked the S to rate the pupil's performance, effort and skill and the adequacy of the assistance she provided. After the questionnaire was completed the E debriefed the S.

RESULTS

Questionnaire Results:

Looking at Table 1, which presents the results for the Pre-task Questionnaire, the adjective pairs show only two main effects by Social Class or IQ. The HISES pupil was seen as more autonomous ($p < .05$) and the HIIQ pupil was seen as brighter ($p < .001$).

The Ss's responses to the Educational Attainment, Parental Educational Aspirations and Parental Educational Interest items showed significant Social Class and IQ effects. The HISES pupil was rated as obtaining more education ($p < .001$) and as having parents who were more interested in his education ($p < .001$) and wanted him to obtain more education ($p < .001$) than the parents of the LoSES pupil. The HiIQ pupil was rated higher than the LoIQ pupil on Educational Attainment ($p < .001$) only. There was also a Social Class x IQ interaction ($p < .05$) for Parental Educational Aspirations: the parents of the HISES pupil were rated as wanting more education for their son if he had a high IQ, while parents of the LoSES pupil were rated as having higher educational aspirations if he had a low IQ. It is intriguing that for all profiles but LoSESHIQ, Ss rated parents' educational aspirations as exceeding the pupil's attainment. This may serve as an "explanation" for the teacher as to why the bright, lower class child does not obtain as much education as his ability alone would predict.

Turning to Table 2 for the Post-task Questionnaire results, we find more IQ than Social Class main effects: The HiIQ pupil was rated as maturer, brighter and more bored (p 's $< .05$); the HISES pupil was rated as quieter ($p < .01$). A Social Class x IQ interaction ($p < .05$) occurred on the Bright-Dull item. In the HISES condition the low and high IQ pupils were rated equally as bright. In the LoSES condition the HiIQ pupil was rated as brighter than the LoIQ pupil.

Turning to Commitment main effects, we find that the primary effect of completing a Pre-task Questionnaire was to reduce the change that occurred from Pre-task to Post-task time periods in viewing the child as active and outgoing. On the Pre-task Questionnaire, Committed Ss rated the pupil as

relatively interested, sociable and noisy. Since Ss were randomly assigned to the Committed and Uncommitted conditions, it seems reasonable to assume that reading the pupil profile resulted in all Ss having similar impressions, although only the impressions of the Committed Ss were assessed. On the Post-task Questionnaire, the rating for all Ss on how interested, sociable and noisy the pupil was were low, but not as low for the Committed Ss as for the Uncommitted Ss. Committed Ss saw the pupil as noisier ($p < .05$), more sociable ($p < .01$) and interested ($p < .05$) than did the Uncommitted Ss.

As with the Pre-task Questionnaire responses, the Educational Attainment, Parental Educational Aspirations and Parental Educational Interest items all showed strong Social Class effects favoring the HISES pupil (p 's $< .001$). The HIIQ pupil was favored only on Educational Attainment ($p < .05$).

Table 3 compares Committed Ss's responses to the Pre-task and Post-task Questionnaires. Significant change occurred on almost every item. Ss seemed very willing to rate the child differently on the bipolar adjectives. Predictions about how much education he would obtain and Ss's perceptions of how much education his parents wanted for him were more resistant to change. This is a bit disturbing if teachers' educational expectations for a child and their view of parental educational aspirations have any impact on the education and encouragement a child receives.

Teachers' Expectations of Pupil's Performance:

There was a significant main effect for IQ ($p < .05$) but not for Social Class. Ss predicted that the HIIQ pupil would make more words than the LoIQ pupil.

Interaction Results:

Only qualitative interaction differences for the 12 Minute Task Period and for the time period After Provocation (see Tables 4 and 5) will be discussed because of time constraints.

A 13 category system was devised for coding teachers' statements to the child confederate. The overall reliability of this system was .95 (based on 39 tapes that were coded by the author and another coder; reliabilities of individual tapes ranged from .89 to 1.00). Several of these categories were combined into larger categories for purposes of analysis.

For both the 12 Minute Task Period and the time period after Provocation (approximately four minutes) it was hypothesized that the LoSES or LoIQ pupil would receive a larger percentage of Negative Affect Statements, but receive smaller percentages of Positive Affect Statements and Task Statements than the HiSES or HiIQ pupil. For neither time period were there main effects as hypothesized. For the 12 Minute Task Period, Social Class interacted with Commitment on the percentage of Positive Affect Statements ($p < .05$). In the Committed condition, the percentages of Positive Affect Statements directed to the HiSES and LoSES pupils were similar; in the Uncommitted condition, a greater percentage of Positive Affect Statements were directed to the LoSES pupils. Social Class also interacted with IQ ($p < .05$) on the percentage of Negative Affect Statements. The LoSES child did receive a greater percentage of Negative Affect Statements but only in the HiIQ condition. However, the number of Negative Affect Statements was quite small so that the reliability of this finding is very questionable.

For the time period After Provocation, Social Class and IQ each interacted with Commitment on the percentage of Positive Affect Statements.

Within the Uncommitted condition, a greater percentage of Positive Affect Statements was directed to the LoSES pupil than to the HiSES pupil ($p < .001$) and to the HiIQ pupil than to the LoIQ pupil ($p < .01$); within the Committed condition the favored groups were reversed.

If one thinks of the Uncommitted condition as being closer to real life (in the real world a teacher is often presented with information on a child with no immediate request for her to commit herself to an impression based on that information), it seems, contrary to common expectations, that teachers are more likely to direct positive statements to a lower class pupil than to a middle class pupil.

CONCLUSIONS

Neither the Pre- or Post-task Questionnaire adjective pairs provided much evidence that teachers have a negative impression of lower class pupils. Furthermore, the extent of change in Committed Ss's responses from the Pre- to Post-task Questionnaire suggests that teachers' initial impressions were responsive to new information, i.e., how the pupil behaved.

When the teachers' educational predictions for the different children were considered, and their view of the parents' educational hopes and interest in the child's education were assessed, the results were quite different: the LoSES pupil compared to his HiSES counterpart was seen as obtaining less education and his parents were seen as being less interested in his education and as desiring less education for him. All three items are potentially important for the impact they might have on teachers' behavior. Given that the teacher feels that the parents neither desire much education

for their child nor are very interested in his education, and that the teacher also expects lower educational attainment (perhaps in response to her perceptions of the parents' educational interest and desires), it is possible that she may demand less of the low SES child. Furthermore, these assessments did not appear to be affected by the child's behavior, that is, they did not significantly change from the Pre- to the Post-task Questionnaire.

The effect of Social Class on teacher behavior varied as a function of Commitment. In the Uncommitted condition, the condition which seems closer to reality, teachers favored the LoSES pupil with Positive Affect Statements.

Taken as a whole, this pattern of results failed to show that the teachers held negative impressions of a lower class pupil and that they interacted with him in a negative manner, at least not in a one-to-one situation. The only negative notes were the teachers' educational predictions for the lower class pupil and their less favorable view of his parents' interest in his education and their educational aspirations for him. It can be argued that the teachers' judgments were merely reflections of an awareness of what really occurs in life: lower class children are less likely to complete high school and go on to college. However, the critical question is to what degree do these negative perceptions contribute to the social reality. In this study, these negative perceptions did not seem to affect the teachers' performance expectations nor their behavior in a one-to-one situation. But such perceptions might affect the lower class pupil in the classroom where he does not have the teacher's attention all to himself. Such perceptions might have an effect at other points in his school career: How is he counseled about choosing a curriculum? How

is he assigned to a track, especially if on ability criteria he could be assigned to either of two tracks?

I will end with the researcher's lament: "More studies need to be done" but with one caution. More studies are not needed which merely show that teachers view lower class and middle class pupils differently. Knowing that lower class pupils are seen differently does not tell us how, and if, they are treated differently by teachers. Behavioral studies are needed, in schools, not in laboratories. If inappropriate differential behavior is found, the final step is not simply to make teachers aware of their biases but to work with teachers to help them change their behavior. This can best be accomplished if teachers are treated as partners in the enterprise, not the enemy.

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TABLE 1
Significance of F Tests from Analyses of Variance
Pre-task Questionnaire

Item	Social Class (A)	IQ (B)	A X B
Interested - Bored			
Bright - Dull		$p < .001$	
Tidy - Untidy			
Assertive - Nonassertive			
Quiet - Noisy			
Attractive - unattractive			
Active - Passive			
Happy - Unhappy			
Sociable - Unsociable			
Enthusiastic - Unenthusiastic			
Mature - Immature			
Receptive - Unreceptive			
Autonomous - Dependent	$p < .05$		
Well-behaved - Unruly			
Bold - Shy			
Educational Attainment	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	
Parental Educational Aspirations	$p < .001$		$p < .05$
Parental Educational Interest	$p < .001$		
Desire to Teach			

TABLE 2

Significance of F Tests from Analyses of Variance

Post-task Questionnaire

Item	Social Class (A)	IQ (B)	Commit- ment (C)	A X B	A X C	B X C
Interested - Bored		p< .05	p< .05			
Bright - Dull		p< .05		p< .05		p< .05
Tidy - Untidy						
Assertive - Nonassertive						
Quiet - Noisy	p< .01		p< .05			
Attractive - Unattractive						
Active - Passive						
Happy - Unhappy						
Sociable - Unsociable			p< .01			
Enthusiastic - Unenthusiastic						
Mature - Immature						
Receptive - Unreceptive		p< .05				
Autonomous - Dependent						
Well-behaved - Unruly						
Bold - Shy						
Educational Attainment	p< .001	p< .05				
Parental Educational Aspirations	p< .001					
Parental Educational Interest	p< .001					
Desire to Teach						
Performance						
Effort						
Skill						

TABLE 3

Mean Difference of Item Scores on Pre-task and Post-task Questionnaire
for Committed Ss

Item	Pre-task Mean	Post-task Mean	Mean Difference	t
Interested - Bored	9.48	4.33	5.15	9.14***
Bright - Dull	10.05	8.15	1.90	3.68**
Tidy - Untidy	8.48	9.62	1.15 ¹	2.31*
Assertive - Nonassertive	8.38	6.70	2.18	4.32**
Quiet - Noisy	7.62	10.78	3.15 ¹	7.24***
Attractive - Unattractive	9.08	11.12	2.05 ¹	4.28***
Active - Passive	9.78	5.52	4.25 ¹	8.78***
Happy - Unhappy	9.38	4.72	4.65 ¹	7.38***
Sociable - Unsociable	9.95	6.15	3.80	10.49***
Enthusiastic - Unenthusiastic	9.22	3.68	5.55 ¹	12.26***
Mature - Immature	8.15	8.40	.25	.44
Receptive - Unreceptive	9.62	5.25	4.38 ¹	6.35***
Autonomous - Dependent	8.82	8.40	.42	.73
Well-behaved - Unruly	10.12	9.42	.70	1.23
Bold - Shy	8.38	6.68	1.70	3.16
Educational Attainment	3.22	3.00	.22	1.74
Parental Educational Aspirations	3.55	3.42	.12 ¹	1.10
Parental Educational Interest	10.90	10.45	.45	2.03*
Desire to Teach	12.50	11.72	.78	2.17*

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001

¹ Absolute difference obtained when Post-task Mean subtracted from Pre-task Mean does not equal Mean Difference because of rounding effects.

TABLE 4

Significance of F Tests From Analyses of Variance
Interaction During 12 Minute Task Period

Statement Category	Social Class (A)	IQ (B)	Commitment (C)	A X B	A X C	B X C
Positive Affect					$p < .05$	
Negative Affect				$p < .05$		
Task						

TABLE 5

Significance of F Tests from Analyses of Variance
Interaction After Provocation

Statement Category	Social Class (A)	IQ (B)	Commitment (C)	A X B	A X C	B X C
Positive Affect					$p < .001$	$p < .01$
Negative Affect						
Task						